104-10137-10200 1993 RELEASE UNDER THE PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY ASSASSINATION RECORDS ACT OF 1992

WP APR 27 1968

FBI Discounts Conflicting

By Gaylord Shaw
Associated Press

FBI officials are quietly trying to play down contradictory descriptions of the appearance and habits of James Earl Ray, alias Eric Starvo Galt, the elusive escaped convict charged with the murder of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The discrepancies have fueled speculation that perhaps Ray and Galt actually are two persons, or that two or more persons used the name Galt.

No official statement has been issued to rebut this theory. But FBI sources insisted that Ray and Galt are the same person.

"We know there's only one person involved here," said one official.

"We've got his fingerprints and we know who he is."

Although the FBI now insists the man it seeks is Ray, it has not amended a conspiracy complaint against Galt—charging that Galt had conspired with "an individual he alleged to be his brother" to violate Dr. King's civil rights—to change the name to Ray.

In enlisting the public's help in the manhunt, the FBI has distributed thousands of flyers. The first set bears Galt's name, the second Ray's.

Puzzling aspects of the case continue to pop up.

Atlanta residents said cigarette or cigar ashes were scattered on the carpeted floor of a white 1966 Mustang that FBI agents impounded there a week after Dr. King was slain. They also said a cigar butt fell out of the car when agents opened the door. The FBI has said the car was owned by Galt. But a number of people who knew Galt say he does not smoke.

Reporters showed copies of the FBI-released picture of Galt to the Birmingham witnesses, and to residents of the Memphis rooming house from which the fatal shot was fired. Almost all said the photo didn't resemble the man they saw.

Varying ages have been given for the hunted man, from 25 on up. The FBI said Galt gave his age as 36. It said Ray is 40.

Estimates of the fugitive's height have ranged from 5-feet-8 to 6-feet, his weight from 160 to 175 pounds. His eyes have been described as either blue or hazel, his hair as either brown or sandy.

An FBI official brushed off the

THE WASHINGTON POST Saturday, April 27, 1968 A 3

Reports on King Suspect

varying descriptions, saying "you run into this every time — it's human nature."

"Anyway, this guy is a professional con. He can change his hair line in three minutes with a razor, and he can gain or lose 20 pounds when he wants to."

There are conflicts, too, in descriptions of Galt's habits, including:

Appearance: The FBI reported Galt "is said to be a neat dresser," while others who knew Ray said he was careless in his dress.

Speech: The Memphis rooming house manager said the man to whom she rented a room three hours before Dr. King was slain had a Southern drawl. An inmate who knew Ray in the Missouri penitentiary said Ray, a native of Illinois, had no Southern accent.

Money: Galt appeared to spend money freely, and paid $2000 cash for the white Mustang. Ray, said the inmate, "was tight as a tick . . . if you owed him money, even a few cents, he would bug you to death."

Music-dancing: The FBI said Galt "is a fan of western and country music" and "is said to be an avid dancer." The inmate said Ray "never expressed any liking" for music or dancing.

The FBI said Galt took dancing lessons in New Orleans in 1964 and 1965. But after reporters pointed out Ray was in prison these two years, FBI officials said the statement should have read "reportedly" took dancing lessons.

Galt graduated from a Los Angeles bartending school last March, the FBI said. Reporters determined that at this same time a duplicate driver's license was mailed to Galt at the Birmingham rooming house.

Dr. Donald B. Peterson, superintendent of a Missouri state hospital where Ray was examined for six weeks in 1966, said "We didn't find anything to indicate he was a killer or had tendencies to kill."

The penitentiary warden, Harold Swenson, said he remembered Ray. "It's odd, but I won't believe he did it (killed Dr. King) until it is proven."

But in Dalton, Ga., a former cellmate quoted Ray as once saying he would be willing to kill Dr. King for a $1 million bounty.

#2

18221

WS APR 28 1968

FBI Checks Canadian Lead In Search for King's Killer

By JEREMIAH O'LEARY
Star Staff Writer

The search for the suspected killer of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. now has branched into Canada.

This development came after the Federal Bureau of Investigation received information that James Earl Ray, sought as King's assassin visited Montreal last July and August during the Expo 67 fair. The FBI declined comment and provided no details as to whom the 40-year-old suspect might have seen in Canada or the purpose of his visit.

Ray escaped from the Missouri State Penitentiary at Jefferson City, Mo., in April 1967 and bought a 1966 white Mustang in Birmingham, Ala., in August. No information is available on his means of transportation between those dates.

Mexico and West Germany also are considered possible hiding places. Ray is known to have visited Mexico after purchasing the Mustang picked up by the FBI in Atlanta the day after the April 4 slaying in Memphis. Ray had a long tour of duty in West Germany when he was in the U. S. Army from 1946 to 1948.

More than three weeks after the assassination officials are indicating that the trail is cold. Investigators have been banking heavily on the fact that more than $150,000 in rewards has been offered for information leading to arrest of the fugitive. They also are working long hours to check out the hundreds of tips that have poured in from people who think they have seen the suspect.

The FBI has done a vacuum-sweeper job of collecting information about Ray, his habits, usual haunts and acquaintances. They are now in the position of knowing nearly everything about Ray except his whereabouts and whether he was working alone or as trigger-man for a conspiracy.

Some officials are leaning more and more to the theory that Ray was paid to shoot King—not on the basis of solid information, but because it has been impossible to account for the amount of money he spent from the time of his escape from the Missouri prison on April 23, 1967, until last April 4.

#2

18223